

must remain respectful and impersonal. All Board work, deliberation and decision-making should be maintained as confidential until such time as it may be made public.

6. Learn to disregard information that may have been obtained outside of the record in a particular case, reaching conclusions and decisions based only on the facts and circumstances surrounding the matter or issue and pursuant to relevant statutes and regulations.
7. Avoid situations that may be viewed by others to be improperly motivated to involve a conflict. Members should remain independent and free from influence of special interest groups. Board membership should never be viewed as an opportunity to represent or promote the interests of the medical profession or a speciality. Potential conflict should be raised with the Division Ethics Officer or a counseling deputy in advance of a meeting, if possible.
8. Decline to answer questions about specific cases or applicants and, instead, direct all inquiries, issues or matters within the Board's authority to the attention of the Board to be considered by all members at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

What about Public Board Members ?

The public members of the Board are expected to represent and express the interests and concerns of the general public and take into account the perspectives of consumers and patients of the medical profession. Public members may not have any association or relationship with the profession or a person who is licensed by the Board. The role of public members is to:

1. Provide a balance in Board decision-making to ensure that decisions do not favor the medical profession or any other group over the interests of the public.
2. Increase public participation and representation to ensure confidence and trust in the Board's decision-making.
3. Bring additional skills, experiences and perspectives to the Board to foster broader deliberations and decision-making.
4. Question and re-examine traditional ideas and practices to provide a fresh-look from an outsider's perspective.
5. Foster consumer input and participation in matters of public interest before the Board.

To ensure that public members play a pivotal role in balancing the make-up of the Board, such public members should not:

1. Be intimidated by the professional members of the Board.
2. Impede Board actions or decision-making due to a lack of understanding of complex medical issues. Abstention may be appropriate in some instances, as preferable to casting an uninformed vote.
3. Cast votes towards a bloc or faction of the Board in the absence of informed analysis.



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY
DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

"So You Think You Want to Be A Board Member"

What Does the State Board of Medical Examiners Do?

The role of Board members is to oversee the medical profession by implementing statutes, regulations, policies and procedures in order to regulate the conduct of medical practitioners. In this role, Board members must keep three constituent groups in mind: 1) the public; 2) applicant/licensees; and 3) Board member colleagues.

The general public has the right to expect that the Board will protect it from unsafe practitioners. Consumers presume that those applying for licensure and, thereafter, those ultimately licensed, are qualified and competent to practice and will continue to uphold the highest standards of medical practice. Consumers deserve to be treated fairly when dealing with the Board and kept apprised of the progress of Board review of complaints.

Applicants for licensure expect that their application for admission to practice will be handled impartially and without unnecessary delay. Once licensed, practitioners should be able to assume that their licensing Board will oversee the profession in the least restrictive manner and treat them fairly in any encounter they may experience with the Board.

A Board member owes a duty to other Board colleagues as well. There is an obligation to listen and respect all viewpoints and assist in setting good public policy in furtherance of the Board's mission and goals.

How Do Board Members Achieve These Goals?

A Board member carries out their mission and fosters these public protection goals by:

1. Establishing the standards for entry into the medical profession and standards for maintaining continued competency.
2. Treating all applicants for licensure equally and fairly.
3. Ensuring that those who are licensed by the Board are qualified to practice safely.
4. Developing and implementing public policy to further the licensing of applicants, regulating the medical profession and disciplining practitioners.
5. Monitoring the delivery of medical services to the public to ensure acceptable standards of medical practice.
6. Imposing sanctions on practitioners who fail to meet the standards of medical practice or are found to have violated the Board's statutes and regulations.
7. Providing consumers information about the Board and its activities and explain and justify its policies and actions.
8. Ensuring that the public will be dealt with fairly when contacting the agency.
9. Assuring that complaints of a consumer against a practitioner will be reviewed and resolved equitably, professionally and as speedily as possible, in light of the matters to be investigated.

Am I Suited For the Role?

To well serve the interests of the Board, a Board member is expected to exhibit the following characteristics:

1. A genuine and demonstrable interest in public service.
2. A personal commitment to attend all monthly Board meetings and assigned committee meetings, which involves a commitment of 2 to 3 full days a month and additional time set aside for preparation.
3. A willingness to be open-minded and respectfully consider the points of view of others and a capacity to be fair in decision making to all parties involved in Board matters.
4. Common sense.
5. Assertiveness, tenacity and resistance to intimidation.
6. A familiarity with Board statutes, regulations and policies, as well as the Board structure and processes and the relationship among the Board, the Division of Consumer Affairs, the Division of Law, the Department of Law and Public Safety and other departments of New Jersey State government, with related responsibilities.
7. A sound knowledge base and an understanding of community standards in one's field of expertise, if filling a professional seat on the Board.
8. Solid communication skills, both verbal and written, and an ability to sift through and synthesize a great deal of information, without losing sight of the important issues.
9. A willingness to make difficult decisions that sometimes may cause great hardship to those charged with wrongdoing.
10. Endurance. Board meetings begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and often last well into the evening.

What Would I Actually be Doing?

To work effectively and carry out the mission of the Board, a member must:

1. Review agendas and supporting materials prior to Board and Committee meetings. Failure to be adequately prepared impairs the effective administration of meetings and decision making and is unfair both to the public whose welfare is to be promoted and to the parties to an investigation.
2. Attend meetings regularly. Such attendance requires prompt arrival to all meetings and a commitment to remain at all meetings until all Board matters are concluded. Failure to attend and remain at meetings may result in a lack of quorum and as a result important decisions implicating the public safety or a licensee's livelihood will need to be postponed.
3. Actively participate and contribute to Board discussions and decision making. To be engaged in the dialogue, members must be knowledgeable about the issues confronting the Board and remain focused on Board business and on track with agenda items. Members are encouraged to ask questions, seek clarification and request guidance if necessary so that they will have an understanding of the issues, consequences and results before making a final decision.
4. Communicate their questions, ideas, positions and reasoning in discussions and in writing. Well-focused questions posed at a hearing can be immensely helpful. Tangential exploration of issues that are not germane to the charges are likely to protract the process. Board members with expertise in a particular field will often be called upon to evaluate materials and provide colleagues with a written opinion.
5. Work with other Board members in a group decision-making, consensus building process. Once a majority decision of the Board has been announced, members should not undermine it. Any disagreements or differences of opinion